

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-05 H-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15
PRS-01 SP-02 /080 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDERLAND:RGH/DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. COLLUMS
NEA/ARN - MR. REUTHER

-----210731Z 120177 /16

R 201512Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEURCAP CINCEUR FOR POLAD

UNCLAS STATE 116541

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MAY 19

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING MAY 19, 1977:

Q. YOU MENTIONED THAT THE MIDDLE EAST DISCUSSION IN GENEVA
HAS RESUMED BUT THE DEPARTURE HAS NOW SLIPPED UNTIL SATUR-
DAY.

A. YES, THAT'S CORRECT.

Q. HAS THE SECRETARY -- MAYBE I MISSED IT, BUT I JUST
WONDERED -- HAS THE SECRETARY ISSUED ANY NOTE OF CONGRATU-
LATIONS TO MR. BEGIN ON HIS VICTORY IN HIS PARTY'S --

A. NOT THAT I KNOW OF. I HAD A QUESTION SIMILAR TO THAT
YESTERDAY.

Q. THAT WAS YESTERDAY.
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A. I SAID I PRESUME WE WOULD DO WHAT WE NORMALLY DO. I
DON'T KNOW OF ANY --

Q. WHAT DO WE NORMALLY DO? I MEAN DON'T WE SEND CON-
GRATULATIONS WHEN ONE OF OUR ALLIES HAS AN ALECTION AND
A MAN WINS?

A. THEY'RE USUALLY PRO FORMA MESSAGES TO HEADS OF GOVERN-
MENT OR HEADS OF STATE ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS. I DON'T
KNOW OF ANY --

Q. HAVE YOU SENT ANY PRO FORMA MESSAGE AT ALL?

A. THAT WOULD OBVIOUSLY COME OUT OF THE WHITE HOUSE.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK WITH THEM.

Q. IS BEGIN PRIME MINISTER YET?

A. NO. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN --

Q. THERE'S A LITTLE CONFUSION HERE, ISN'T THERE? WE NORMALLY CONGRATULATE PRIME MINISTERS, DON'T WE? AND WE DON'T CONGRATULATE PEOPLE JUST FOR WINNING ELECTIONS IF THEY HAVEN'T BECOME PRIME MINISTER OR TAKEN OFFICE.

A. THE CONGRATULATIONS OR MESSAGE IS SENT ONCE AN INDIVIDUAL IS NAMED PRIME MINISTER OR IS ELECTED.

Q. THAT QUESTION HAS NOT YET ARISEN, HAS IT?

A. I DON'T THINK IT HAS, NO.

Q. FRED, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON A STATEMENT BY MR. WALDHEIM IN GENEVA THAT THE GENEVA MEETING, IN LIGHT OF THE ELECTIONS, MAY NOT BE RECONVENED UNTIL LATER
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THIS YEAR OR MAYBE NEXT YEAR AND THAT THE OUTCOME HAS INCREASED THE CHANCE OF A -- I THINK HE USED THE WORD "MILITARY CONFRONTATION" -- IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. AS I THINK THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MADE VERY CLEAR WHEN HE WAS SPEAKING, HE WAS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF, HIS PERSONAL OPINION ON BOTH SALT AND THE MIDDLE EAST. AND FOR THAT REASON WE OFFER NEITHER A DISAGREEMENT NOR AN AGREEMENT ON IT. WE JUST WON'T COMMENT ON IT. HE MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT HE WAS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF.

Q. HE WAS NOT SPEAKING AS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS?

A. WELL, HIS WORDS WERE, I'M SPEAKING -- GIVING YOU MY PERSONAL OPINION, I THINK.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HIS PERSONAL OPINION?

A. I DON'T THINK WE REALLY HAVE TO EXPRESS AN OPINION ON IT.

Q. YOU DON'T HAVE A PERSONAL OPINION ON HIS PERSONAL OPINION? (LAUGHTER.)

A. NO.

Q. HOW ABOUT THE PERSONAL OPINION OF MR. MORTON OF CBS, WHO IN COMMENTING ON THE LIKUD VICTORY, SAID, "WASHINGTON, IN SHORT, WOULD RATHER THAT THE OTHER GUYS HAD WON."

IS THIS TRUE, UNTRUE OR WHAT?

A. CBS IS CERTAINLY ENTITLED TO ITS OPINION.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR FEELING ON THAT OPINION?

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A. I DON'T HAVE A FEELING.

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, NO COMMENT AT ALL?

A. I DON'T HAVE A FEELING ON CBS' PRONOUNCEMENT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE BEGIN INTERVIEW TODAY
ON THE TODAY SHOW?

A. NO.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE VISIT OF MR. HABIB TO
BAGHDAD?

A. YES, I DO. UNDER SECRETARY HABIB, AS WAS REPORTED,
I THINK YESTERDAY, OR ACTUALLY THE DAY BEFORE, DID
VISIT BAGHDAD. IT WAS A SHORT VISIT MAY 15TH TO 17TH.
HE HAD A CORDIAL AND CANDID TALK OF ABOUT TWO HOURS ON
MAY 16TH WITH THE IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER, SA'DUN HAMMADI.
THE PURPOSE OF THIS TRIP WAS TO EXPLORE WITH THE IRAQI
GOVERNMENT HOW UNITED STATES AND IRAQI RELATIONS COULD BE
IMPROVED, AND MR. HABIB MADE CLEAR THAT HE WAS THERE TO
LISTEN AS WELL AS TO DESCRIBE THE U.S. POSITION. THE
VISIT WAS AT OUR INITIATIVE. WE HAD NO INTENTION TO
PRODUCE DRAMATIC RESULTS, BUT THE TRIP WAS CONSISTENT
WITH THE ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE FOR THE WIDEST POSSIBLE
GOOD RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

Q. ARE YOU OPEN TO QUESTIONS ON THAT NOW?

A. YES. THAT'S ABOUT ALL I HAVE ON IT.

Q. DID THE IRAQI'S BRING UP THE PRESENCE IN THIS
COUNTRY OF MUSTAFA BARZANI?

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A. I DON'T HAVE ANY DETAILS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THOSE

TALKS.

Q. WAS AMERICA --

A. THAT'S ABOUT IT. THAT'S ABOUT WHAT I HAVE ON IT.

Q. WELL, LET ME ASK A THEORETICAL QUESTION, THEN.

A. YES.

Q. IN COMMUNIST TERMINOLOGY, WE USUALLY KNOW WHAT THE DESCRIPTION OF A MEETING MEANS. IF THEY SAY IT WAS "FRANK," THAT MEANS THERE WAS SOME DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. I'M NOT USED TO HEARING YOU USE THE WORD "CANDID" IN THESE DESCRIPTIONS OF TALKS. IT SEEMS TO ME A RATHER UNUSUAL WORD FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO CHOOSE --

A. ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT WE ARE REALLY CANDID?

Q. COULD YOU HELP ME TO INTERPRET THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT? DOES "CANDID" MEAN A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION OR HOW DOES ONE -- ?

A. I WOULDN'T READ THE TEA LEAVES TOO ASSIDUOUSLY ON THAT ONE. IT'S JUST THE DESCRIPTION THAT WE CHOSE.

Q. AM I CORRECT IN THINKING IT IS NOT VERY FREQUENTLY USED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN DESCRIBING TALKS?

A. WELL, PERHAPS IT'S MORE IN VOGUE NOW. (LAUGHTER.)

CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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